

REMARKS/ARGUMENT

This divisional application covers the process. The additional claims detail elements introduced in the original claims.

Claims 26-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for certain informalities in Claim 26. Claim 26, the independent claims for all of the other claims, has been amended to overcome those informalities and to make the claim clearer without narrowing its scope.

Two features of the invention distinguish it from the prior art. As seen in Figs. 1, 2 and 3, and as discussed, among other places, at page 5 of applicant's specification, the second fiber ply is formed on the first wire section wire 22 at 26, 28, 30, 32 or 52 in a region which lies upstream of the combining section in the running direction of the belt, i.e. to the right of the roll 42 in the drawing Figures. Any dripping, release of dewatered water and fiber, etc. from the second fiber ply occurs over a region upstream of the combining section, to the right of the roll 42, so that the combined first and second plies are not subject to receiving what might fall from the entrance of suspension into the forming section which forms the second ply, from the forming section or from the dewatering regions of the forming section,

Secondly, the entry angle of less than 90° of the second fiber ply into the combining section, which can be seen in all of the drawing Figures, has a benefit of a not so sharp deflection of the second wire and of the second ply thereon, again as noted at page 5 of applicant's specification. These two features, separately and together, covered in all of applicant's claims herein, are neither shown nor suggested in the prior art.

Claims 26, 27 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Steckenreuter et al. Reconsideration is requested. As to Claim 26, the second fiber ply is formed upstream of the combining section along the first direction of the first belt. In Steckenreuter, in contrast, the second fiber ply is formed as the stream of suspension 9 departs the head box and enters the roller press 8, at a location downstream of the roll 15 which defines the combining section between the first wire section wire 4 and the first belt 2. Secondly, the location of the entrance 9 and of the roll 8 at a location downstream of the roll 15 with respect to the first belt causes the first wire section wire to enter the combining section at an angle of at least about or perhaps greater than 90°, with respect to the direction of the first belt 2. This is distinguishable from and provides an improvement over the art. It is covered in at least Claims 29 and 30. Not

only does Steckenreuter not anticipate the claims, but Steckenreuter has the operational drawbacks which the present invention is designed to overcome. The claims are neither anticipated nor obvious over Steckenreuter et al.

All of the claims were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Shimazu et al., with particular reference to Fig. 9. Reconsideration is requested for the same reasons as it was requested as to Steckenreuter.

All of the Figures in Shimazu et al. show a sequence of overlaid layers, one on top of the other. It is not clear from Fig. 9 at least where the successive second fiber plies are each formed. But with reference to Fig. 9 as an example, the head box 15 is downstream of the combining section at 20, 23 in respect of the longitudinal first direction of a first belt, which is unnumbered but is below 21 and 22, and that carries the combined plies. Secondly, the angle of entry of what might be viewed as the first wire section wire into the combining section with respect to the longitudinal direction of the first belt is different than applicant claims. It is not clear that Shimazu discloses a combining section as applicant has claimed. Consequently, neither Shimazu Fig. 9 nor any of the other Figures of Shimazu shows the two features of applicant's process that have been discussed herein.

Kankaanpää, U.S. Patent 4,154,645 of record in the parent patent hereof, shows an arrangement, as in Steckenreuter and Shimazu, where the headbox is located and where the second ply is formed downstream of the combining section at the roll 24.

Applicants' new claims 30-36 add features not suggested in the art, including the meeting and separation of the wire section wires upstream of the combining section in claims 32, 35, and 36 and the curvature of the joint path and the overlying of wires in claim 33.

It is submitted that claims 26-36 are allowable.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Asst. Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on August 27, 2001.

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